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THE ELOQUENCE
OF THE
COLONIAL
AND
REVOLUTIONARY TIMES.

WITH SKETCHES OF
EARLY AMERICAN STATESMEN AND PATRIOTS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE
NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY OF CINCINNATI.

BY
REV. E. L. MAGOON.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

CINCINNATI:
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CINCINNATI:

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CINCINNATI, SYCAMORE STREET, APRIL 30, 1847.

REV. E. L. MAGOON :

*My dear Sir—*

By a resolution of the NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY, of last evening, I am instructed in the name of the Board of Directors, and the Members, very cordially to thank you for your two brilliant and eloquent Orations, delivered on Monday and Thursday evenings of this week; and to request a copy for the press.

If you accede to this request, the Orations will be brought out immediately in a permanent book form, and in a neat and attractive way, by one of our enterprising houses here, Derby, Bradley & Co.

Very truly, &c.

CHAUNCEY COLTON,

*Cor. Sec. N. E. Soc.*

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#### NOTE INTRODUCTORY.

The New England Society of this city requested the writer to deliver two orations on "The Popular Eloquence of the Colonial and Revolutionary Period of our History," and they were delivered. They now wish to print what they had the kindness to listen to with marked attention, and the manuscript is going to the press. Why not? May not the humblest devotee, however insignificant, be admitted to the temple, provided he loves truly, and brings the best offering in his power to the shrine? What is herewith presented is brief, certainly, for such a theme; but it has cost more to make it thus than it would to have increased its bulk.

The subject is a glorious one, and has been under consideration for ten years or more. It has been the author's custom

and delight frequently to ramble about the field of Lexington, and on Bunker's Heights—on the banks of the Delaware at Trenton, and along the shores of the Bay at Yorktown.—His favorite seat in "Old South" was in the upper gallery, where it is fancied *that* "Mohawk" cried out to the multitudes below—"Boston harbor, a teapot to-night!"—and the handsomest cannon ball to his eye is the one that sticks in the side of "Brattle Square."\* One could wish they all would keep as still, but they will not. Masses of ore now lie bedded in hills, where the white man has scarcely trod, destined to be smelted for the work of carnage, and to rend down curtain after curtain of the drapery of Providence, until the banners of Liberty are planted under every meridian of our globe. The things that in our day we have seen, and the things our fathers have told us, are but—

"The baby figures of the giant map  
Of things to come at large."

Here, on this western continent especially, it is evident that mighty developments are yet in reserve. The time will come when the temples of science, literature and religion, gemming the highest summits of the Rocky Mountains, will reflect the sun's splendor from their aspiring domes, and from the sublimest terrace of all, girding Liberty's temple around, the finest genius of the Anglo-Saxon race will look down on splendid cities on either hand, studding the immense domain whereon accumulating millions of citizens, happy in

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\* The reader, who is unacquainted with the early churches of Boston, need be informed that the "Old South" is closely connected with many Revolutionary events. It was here, for instance, that "The Mohawks" assembled, and thence marched to destroy the cargoes of tea in the harbor.

"Brattle Square" was the church Hancock usually attended. His name, cut near the great entrance, was rudely obliterated with a pick-axe, by "the Britishers." A cannon ball still lies half buried in the wall, near the eaves, where it was shot from the heights out of town.

their toils and magnanimous in their enterprise, sing the choral song of the free, while the Atlantic's murmur and the Pacific's roar mingle and blend with equal notes in America's grand jubilee.

“ —Thou, my country, thou shalt never fall,  
But with thy children—thy maternal care,  
Thy lavish love, thy blessings showered on all—  
These are thy fetters—seas and stormy air  
Are the wide barrier of thy borders, where,  
Among thy gallant sons that guard thee well,  
Thou laugh'st at enemies: who shall then declare  
The date of thy deep-founded strength, or tell  
How happy, in thy lap, the sons of men shall dwell ?”

Often has the writer pondered on these things in Fanueil Hall, in the Hall of Independence at Philadelphia, and amid the ruins of the House of Burgesses at Williamsburg. Leaning against the tomb at Mount Vernon, or rambling in the precincts of Monticello; delving among musty records, or seated on venerable graves, with busy thoughts thrilling at his heart, he has meditated on the topics slightly broached in the small volume herewith submitted to the public. Think, reader, of those germs, as they struggled amid the snows of Plymouth, or drooped on the sands of Jamestown. Trace their growth as they were invigorated by successive storms, and estimate, if you can, the value of their legitimate and matured expansion, when in fruitful harvests they shall wave round the world.

The following portraitures are but sketches done in little, as an artist would say. They are mere outlines, private studies, and genial recreations. Perhaps one day we may set up a larger canvass, spread a richer palette, and elaborate more extensively a national group.

E. L. M.

*Cincinnati*, May 1st, 1847.

## FIRST ORATION.

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JAMES OTIS, *Orator of intrepid Passion.*

SAMUEL ADAMS, *Last of the Puritans;*

JOSIAH QUINCY, *Orator of refined Enthusiasm;*

JOHN HANCOCK, *Dignified Cavalier of Liberty;*

JOSEPH WARREN, *Type of our Martial Eloquence;*

JOHN ADAMS, *Orator of blended Enthusiasm and Sobriety.*

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## SECOND ORATION.

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PATRICK HENRY, *Incarnation of Revolutionary Zeal;*

RICHARD HENRY LEE, *The Polished Statesman;*

STYLES, DAVIES, DUCHE, STILLMAN, CARROLL,

*Specimens of the Patriotic Preachers of that day.*

ALEXANDER HAMILTON, *Master of Political Sagacity;*

FISHER AMES, *Orator of Genius and Elaborate Beauty.*

## FIRST ORATION.

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THE planting of English colonies in America was the beginning of an influence which stopped not at their original boundaries.—The world has witnessed its expansion. The human race has felt its power. To the world, then—to the human race—belongs their influence, and in that their greatest glory.

We are becoming a great nation, and already, perhaps, are accustomed to contemplate the Colonial period of our history as a juvenile era. But, in one sense, we have had no national infancy. We have had no age of barbarism, no gradual transition from an obscure antiquity, with much primitive degradation adhering to our career. America, visited by the Anglo-Saxon race, like the statue of Prometheus touched by heavenly fire, awoke in adult vigor. Her first cry was for freedom, and her first struggle won it. We began with the experience of sixty centuries. We laid our foundations in the results which accompa-

nied and glorified the opening drama of a new world—the sublimest battle ever fought by right against power.

About the period of the first settlement of this country, the mental productions before the public in England, were of the highest excellence. The discussion of constitutional principles, and the fervid strife for toleration in religious matters, had called forth the most potent intellectual energies, and produced some of the profoundest works in divinity and politics, to be found in any age or tongue. As in the ancient republics, and as is the fact in every land where the mind of man is allowed freely to act and speak, the most eloquent writers and profoundest orators were on the side of liberty and the rights of the people. As instances and proofs of this, put Locke and Algernon Sidney by the side of Filmer and the other parasitical advocates of the divine right of kings. It is a wholesome lesson and a vigorous discipline, to read the leading authors of England who flourished between the accession of Charles the First and George of Hanover.

The germs of great principles began to spring up abroad, but their first productive growth was in American soil. A great truth was first proclaimed by our hardy colonists,

which has since traversed oceans, and aroused continents. It is impossible to exaggerate its ultimate effects, not merely upon this western hemisphere, but upon the father-land and the remotest east. The first throbs of liberty here created the tremendous revolutions of Europe, the convulsive spasms of which still agitate the oppressed of all lands. The experiment which demonstrated the practicability of establishing a self-governing republic over a vast domain, is an example which it will be impossible for aristocracies, kings, and emperors, either to resist or restrain.

It was an era of vast energy, a combination of physical force and profound erudition, exemplified by the French in the prodigies which they executed while truly inspired by the genius of liberty. A little army, composed of soldiers and scholars, subdued cities and penetrated citadels, planted institutes and observatories, schools of agriculture, and all the arts of civilization, from the valley of the Rhine to the Delta of Egypt.

But in the birth-place of that spirit, on the sublimer field of its primitive conflict and most glorious conquest, in the American colonies, the main force was mental rather than martial. Eloquence, then, was fervid, bold, and gigantic, like the revolution it defended. Then, ge-

nus was hailed as a divine gift. No trammels were imposed upon imagination—no drag chains crippled patriotic aspirations—no limit marked the boundaries, up to which daring thought might go, but no further.

It should be neither uninteresting nor unprofitable to glance back upon those times, and contemplate a few of the leading minds. In a sense equally elevated, and more relevant to ourselves than Milton expressed, let us—

“To the famous orators repair,  
Those ancients, whose resistless eloquence  
Wielded at will that fierce democracy,  
Shook the arsenal, and fulmin'd over Greece  
To Macedon and Artaxerxes's throne.”

In considering the eloquence of the Colonial and Revolutionary period of our history, we shall find less variety in the works of the orators than in the orators themselves. So absorbed were the statesmen of those days in the immediate and pressing avocations of the crisis, that they bestowed little or no strength on tasks not imperiously exacted by great public duties. But we shall find such men as Otis, and Adams, and Henry, and Hamilton, and Ames, fine embodiments of our early eloquence. They were among the great and gifted spirits of the heroic age of American oratory, and will forever illustrate the grandeur

of its sublimity, the wealth of its magnificence, and the splendor of its imperishable glories.

## JAMES OTIS

Was born February 5th, 1725, in what is now called West Barnstable, Massachusetts. He entered Harvard College, June, 1739, and, in due course, graduated with high honors. After completing his classical studies, he devoted two years to elegant literature before entering upon the study of a profession. He was exceedingly fond of the best poets, and in the passionate emulation of their beauties he energized his spirit and his power of expression. He did not merely read over the finest passages—he pondered them—he fused them into his soul—and reproduced their charms with an energy all his own. In the skill of pouring the whole spirit of an author into the most familiar extract, making the heart bleed at the sorrows of Hecuba, and the soul quake under the imprecations of Lear—a talent of the highest utility in popular address, and capable of being wielded to the noblest ends—James Otis excelled.

His education was “liberal,” in the true and noble sense of the term, and to the end of his brilliant career he prosecuted his studies with untiring industry. In the midst of innumerable professional toils, he wrote a valuable work

on Latin Composition, and another on Greek Prosody, the latter of which remained in manuscript, and perished with all his valuable papers.

As completely armed as he was with scholastic tools, in his public speeches he never played the artificial rhetorician. Before the crowded auditory, he resigned all to the noble impulses of his ardent nature, and sought a connection of ideas rather than words—or rather he sought no relation, and thus wielded the true one; for passion, when deep and honest, has a logic more compact, and more convincing even, than reason. Figures that are striking, emotions that are fleeting, intermingled with close reasoning and calm repose, constitute an eloquence universally popular, because adapted to our nature. Thoughts must not present a dry, anatomical form, allowing the spectator coolly to count the muscles, the tendons and the bones; they must be clothed with flesh, all glowing with a latent heat that gives the body quick motion, and makes it tremble with the energies of immortal life. The fragments of oratorical compositions which remain to us of Mr. Otis, are marked by sudden transitions, bold imagery, rapid reasoning, stern deductions, and overwhelming appeals. He was fearless, impetuous, and imperiously indepen-

dent. These are the mental qualities which constitute a fascinating speaker. The great body of the people comprehend eloquence and genius only under the emblems of force; they are ready to respect that which they love, and will yield willingly to that which impels them; they comprehend that which is easily heard, and deeply venerate the heart that has profoundly moved them. The commanding form, stentorian lungs, and flashing eye, are indispensable adjuncts to the popular orator.

In respect to physical ability, Otis was happily endowed. His biographer says, "his voice and manner were very impressive. The elevation of his mind, and the known integrity of his purposes, enabled him to speak with decision and dignity, and commanded the respect as well as the admiration of his audience. His eloquence showed but little imagination, yet it was instinct with the fire of passion."

During the period of colonial subordination, Otis was the constant vindicator of American rights; and when British usurpation became as burdensome as it was unjust, he defended his countrymen with an eloquence whose ultimate influence transcended his own sublime aspirations. He sowed the seeds of liberty in this new world, without living to see the harvest, and, probably, without ever dream-

ing what magnificent crops would soon be produced.

He first became famous in history, by his well-known opposition to "Writs of Assistance." When the order relating to these came from England, Otis was advocate-general of the colony of Massachusetts. Deeming the writs to be illegal and tyrannical, he refused to enforce them, and resigned his office. At the request of the colonists, he undertook to argue against the writs, and met in fierce strife his veteran law-teacher, Mr. Gridley, then attorney-general. The conflict and conquest were reported by a sagacious youth, destined to be the second President of a mighty Republic on these western shores.

"Otis was a flame of fire," says John Adams, in his sketch of the scene. "With a promptitude of classical allusions, and a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eyes into futurity, and a rapid torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried away all before him. The seeds of patriots and heroes were then and there sown. Every man of an immense crowded audience appeared to me to go away, as I did, ready to take arms against Writs of Assistance. Then and there was the first scene of the first act of

opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain. Then and there the child Independence was born. In fifteen years, that is, in 1776, he grew up to manhood, and declared himself free."

That spark fell where it kindled; and we shall hereafter have occasion to show how that the third President of the United States was in a political sense born simultaneously with the first cry for liberty enunciated in the colony of Virginia, by the great natural orator of the South.

The time to favor freedom, the set time for the advent of a powerful advocate of popular rights, like Otis, had come. Men adapted to the wants of their age are never wanting—when portentous storms are lowering—when the battles of freedom are approaching—when the excited ocean of human emotion waves around some firm, heroic leader, as where—

"The broad breasted rock

Glasses his rugged forehead in the sea."

The unutterable effects of eloquence are produced less by the genius of the speaker, than by the sympathy of the audience. They receive with rapture what their own ardor has half inspired. Deep feeling, kindred to the orator, opens each heart and soul to the stream of his burning thoughts. Assembled multi-

tudes love that which dazzles them, which moves, which strikes, and which enchains them. In the best orations of the ancients, we find not a multiplicity of ideas, but those which are the most pertinent, and the strongest possible; by the first blows struck ignition is produced, and the flame is kept blazing with increased brilliancy and power, until guilt stands revealed in terror, and tyranny flies aghast.

✓ Otis was just the man to kindle a conflagration, to set a continent on fire by the power of speech. His eloquence, like that of his distinguished successors, was marked by a striking individuality. It did not partake largely of the colossal firmness of Samuel Adams; or of the intense brilliancy and exquisite taste of the younger Quincy; or the subdued and elaborate beauty of Lee; or the spontaneousness and profundity of John Adams; or the rugged and overwhelming energy of Patrick Henry. He traversed the field of argument as a Scythian warrior scours the plain, shooting most deadly arrows when at the greatest speed; he rushed into forensic battle fearless of all consequences, and, as the ancient war-chariot would set its axle on fire by the rapidity of its own movement, so would the ardent soul of Otis become ignited and fulminating

with thought. When aroused by some great crisis, his eloquent words were like shafts of granite heated in a volcano; his impetuous soul shot forth like a cannon-ball, crushing as it goes, and crushing what it reaches.

On the occasion referred to above, the torch was kindled which lighted the minions of regal power to their tombs. "I do say in the most solemn manner," continued John Adams, that Mr. Otis' oration against writs of assistance, breathed into this nation the breath of life.

Compared with English orators, our countryman most resembled Sheridan in natural endowment. Like him, he was unequalled and unrivalled in impassioned appeals to the general heart of mankind. He swayed all by his electric fire, charmed the timid, and inspired the weak, subdued the haughty, and enthralled the prejudiced.

## SAMUEL ADAMS.

Of this celebrated man, as of James Otis, there are but few written remains. The orators of those days acted, wrote and spake, as though they felt deeply that they were born for their country and for mankind. They were evidently more intent in laying the foundation of great institutions for the benefit of posterity, than in recording transient memorials of themselves.

The great man of whom we now speak was born in Boston, September 27th, 1722. He was educated at Harvard College, and received its honors in 1740. He first studied divinity, but afterwards devoted his talents entirely to the welfare of his country. He possessed a calm, solid, and yet polished mind. Above all the men of his day, he was distinguished for sound, practical judgment. All prominent statesmen looked to him for counsel. He aided Otis in preparing state papers; and a direction to the printers, attached to some of Josiah Quincy's manuscripts, reads—"Let Samuel Adams, Esq. correct the press."

Another peculiarity of Samuel Adams was, his profound and minute acquaintance with the nature of man. He had studied its secret springs, and could move them at pleasure. He knew that the human heart is like the earth. "You may sow it and plant it and build upon it in all manner of forms; but the earth, however cultivated by man, continues none the less spontaneously to produce its verdures, its wild flowers, and all varieties of natural fruits." The spade and the plough trouble not the profounder depths where innumerable germs are hid. The identity of this planet on which we live is not more perpetual than that of human nature. Its latent impulses we must know. Its spontaneous pro-

ducts we must learn to employ, if we would toil among mankind with success.

Samuel Adams possessed great firmness of character; he was not to be moved by either the bribes or terrors of power. Governor Hutchinson, who had tried the first, wrote in reply to a friend—"Such is the obstinacy and inflexible disposition of the man, that he never can be conciliated by any office or gift whatever."

Governor Gage attempted to intimidate him by threatening an arrest for treason. Mr. Adams first demanded of the messenger, Col. Fenton, a pledge of honor that he would return to Gage his reply just as it was given, and then rising in a firm manner, he said—"I trust I have long since made my peace with *the King of kings*. No personal consideration shall induce me to abandon the righteous cause of my country. Tell Governor Gage, *it is the advice of Samuel Adams to him*, no longer to insult the feelings of an exasperated people."

But pure and exalted patriotism is the most prominent feature in our hero. The freedom and prosperity of his country; the union of all her sons in a common and national fraternity; and the advancement of moral truth, harmony, and virtue, were the grand objects of his unre-mitted pursuit.

The idea of assembling a congress of the colonies, which afterwards led to the organization of the Continental Congress, originated with him. As a delegate in that body, he early became conspicuous. He was placed upon every important committee, wrote or revised every report, and had a hand or a voice in every measure designed to counteract foreign tyranny. The people of America soon recognized in him one of their most efficient supporters, and the government in England openly proclaimed him one of the most inveterate of their opponents.

After he had received warning at Lexington, in the night of the 18th of April, of the intended British expedition, as he proceeded to make his escape through the fields with some friends, soon after the dawn of day, he exclaimed, "This is a fine day!" "Very pleasant, indeed," answered one of his companions, supposing he alluded to the beauty of the sky and atmosphere. "I mean," he replied, "this day is a glorious day for America!" Encompassed as he was by dangers, every personal consideration was lost in his ardent hopes for national liberty.

As an orator, Samuel Adams was peculiarly fitted for the times on which he had fallen. His language was chaste, concise, and persua-

sive. He had more logic in his composition than rhetoric, and was accustomed to convince the judgment rather than inflame the passions; and yet, when the occasion demanded, he could give vent to the ardent and patriotic indignation of which his heart was often full. His enunciation is said to have been remarkably slow, distinct, and harmonious. His thought was rich, his patriotism was undoubted, and his personal worth was of the most exalted character. His influence on the destinies of his country was probably second to that of no other man. He had not the power of convulsing or subduing the popular mind in tumultuous debate, but he could privately lead the leaders. Plain, quiet, indigent, sagacious old puritan as he was, now melting his stern soul into unwonted tears of joy, and pacing the "common" with exulting step, because that morning he had "won that chivalrous young aristocrat, John Hancock," to the popular cause; and now glancing with a sly twinkle in his eye, at fiery resolutions pendant from the "Tree of Liberty," purporting to have been produced by the serene goddess herself, but which, he well knows, first saw the light by his solitary lamp; and anon ensconced behind the "deacon's seat," in "old south," with an immense throng crowding the double galleries

to the very ceiling, he stealthily passes up a pungent resolution, which kindles some more excitable mouth-piece, and finally inflames the heaving and swelling mass with spontaneous cries of "Boston Harbor a tea-pot to-night!" Why he was indeed a power behind the throne greater than the throne, he ruled the winds that moved the waves.

Samuel Adams was the last of the Puritans, and the most puritanic of all our statesmen. Others were endowed with the more splendid gifts of fortune, and more flexile powers of popular harangue; but he, above all his contemporaries, glorified with his incorruptible poverty the revolution which he was the first to excite and the last to abandon. From his soul of steel a spark of true fire was early elicited. On taking his second degree at Harvard, he maintained the noble thesis, that it is lawful to resist the supreme magistrate if the commonwealth cannot otherwise be preserved. Thus, when but twenty-one years old, twenty years before the stamp act was conceived, he expressed in two lines the whole philosophy of the American Revolution.

If eloquence be correctly defined as the art of gaining a cause by the use of words, then was Samuel Adams an eloquent man. The stream of his argument moved along in ma-

jestic simplicity, not reflecting exuberant flowers, nor creating profuse foam, but quickening and fertilizing every thing in its course. He resumed without the ostentatious forms of logic; persuaded, without displaying the graces of persuasion; and led the hearer irresistibly to conviction, without condescending to solicit the belief which he was so powerful to compel.

## JOSIAH QUINCY, JR.

Made a deep impression on his co-patriots, and gave direction to the destinies of the remotest posterity.

He was born in Boston, February 23d, 1744; graduated at Harvard in 1763, and in due time took the degree of Master of Arts, with very high reputation. His theme on the occasion was "patriotism," and is said to have been remarkable both on account of its composition and delivery. He was early distinguished at the bar, and has rendered his name immortal as a patriot. The cultivation of elegant literature supplied his pastime, but love of country was the strong passion of his soul and the habitual inspiration of his public toil.

The peculiar excellence of his oratorical character was refined enthusiasm. The exercise of this was frequent and most effective. In the great debates which he mainly led in

Faneuil Hall, on the Stamp Act, the Boston Massacre, and the Boston Port-Bill, the pathos of his eloquence, the boldness of his invectives, and his impressive vehemence, powerfully inflamed the zeal and aroused the resentment of an oppressed people.

True enthusiasm is no other than the sublime inspiration of an imagination vividly exalted, always united to reason, which it does not sacrifice, but which it animates with the interest and pungency of impassioned sentiment. It is not to astonish by the scaffolding of his learning, that the true orator addresses assembled multitudes; it is to agitate, instruct, and subdue them. True eloquence dissipates doubt and rends prejudice, as hot shot explode a magazine; it is heat combined with force. Hence Dionysius, of Halicarnassus, compared Demosthenes to a sacred fire kindled on the acropolis at Athens, to illuminate and warn a people equally blind and careless, upon questions of the greatest moment.

The orator of the people must vividly arouse in his own bosom all the grand sentiments of liberty, equality, humanity, and virtue, which are dormant in the hearts of all men. Before their fixed eyes and open mouths and swelling bosoms he must evoke the gigantic images of religion, country and glory. He must be able

to make the meadows smile at their feet, and the shepherd's pipe of peace sound from distant hills; or, if it better suit his purpose, he must banish all pleasing images, and wrap the awed multitude in gloom made doubly fearful by earthquakes beneath and thunders on high.

Quincy appeared at an auspicious moment for the exercise of his peculiar talents. The statue of Liberty was not yet cast, but the metal was abundant, was already boiling in the furnace, and how soon the glorious work was to be consummated, is indicated by the following extract of an address which our orator published in the Boston Gazette, October, 1767.

“Be not deceived, my countrymen. Believe not these venal hirelings when they would cajole you by their subtleties into submission, or frighten you by their vaporings into compli-  
ance. When they strive to flatter you by the terms, ‘moderation and prudence,’ tell them, that calmness and deliberation are to guide the judgment; courage and intrepidity command the action. When they endeavor to make us ‘perceive our inability to oppose our mother country,’ let us boldly answer: In defence of our civil and religious rights, we dare oppose the world; with the God of armies on our side, even the God who fought our father’s

battles, we fear not the hour of trial, though the host of our enemies should cover the field like locusts. If this be enthusiasm, we will live and die enthusiasts. Blandishments will not fascinate us, nor will threats of a 'halter,' intimidate. For under God, we are determined, that wheresoever, whensoever, or howsoever, we shall be called to make our exit, we will die freemen.

"Well do we know that all the regalia of this world cannot dignify the death of a villain, nor diminish the ignominy, with which a slave shall quit his existence. Neither can it taint the unblemished honor of a son of freedom, though he should make his departure on the already prepared gibbet, or be dragged to the newly erected scaffold for execution. With the plaudits of his conscience he will go off the stage. A crown of joy and immortality shall be his reward. The history of his life, his children shall venerate. The virtues of their sire shall excite their emulation."

This is a fair specimen of Mr. Quincy's composition. It indicates a power to seize boldly on the attention of an audience. It is a style calculated to arouse its pity, or its indignation, its sympathies, its repugnances, or its pride. It is thus that the popular orator must deal with his fellow men, whether addressing

them through the pen or living voice. He must seem to love the public breath and receive its inspiration, while it is himself who communicates to others his own. When he shall have, in a manner, detached all the souls of the community from their bodies, and they have come to group themselves at his feet, and are docile under the magical power of his look, then might it be truly said, that all those souls had passed into his own. Behold how they undulate in sympathy with the movements of the oratorical mind, the master whom they rapturously obey. They advance or retire, are raised or depressed, as he wills. They are suspended upon his lips by the graces of persuasion, and by a glorious abandonment to his own strong emotions, he captivates and subdues every listening spirit.

In his popular harangues, Mr. Quincy produced the results of his extensive reading in a simple and most forcible manner. He was familiar with the best writers in poetry and prose, and frequently quoted from them, especially the English dramatists. Tradition says that in doing this, the execution was extraordinary. He gave forth not merely the verbiage, the cold medium of sentiment, but he vividly reproduced all that his author originally designed to express. He quoted a lite-

rary gem as though every line and word had been early transplanted into his heart — had been brooded over in silence and bathed at the fount of tears, to burst forth when called for, like the spontaneous and native growth of his soul.

However severe he was in private discipline, and strictly logical in the construction of his argument, in public, he stood unshackled, and careered over the popular mind on the wings of a free and flexile imagination. We should estimate addresses made to miscellaneous audiences by the circumstances which demand a little licence and a good deal of freedom. Who would be so rash as to apply the square and compass to the delicate lyre of Homer, or the sublime one of Pindar? Thus wounded and encumbered, the divine instrument which before was redolent of ravishing harmony, henceforth utters nothing but sharp and discordant sounds.

This refined enthusiasm, so habitually exemplified by Mr. Quincy, constituted the main force of his public influence. His speech might generally be defined as being logic set on fire. This is true of all effective eloquence. The speaking that is not imbued with the living light and heat of profound emotion, is like the statue of Polyphemus with his eye

out; that feature is absent which most shows the soul and life.

About the last of September, 1768, hordes of foreign troops were landed in Boston from fourteen ships of war. With muskets loaded, bayonets fixed, drums beating, fifes playing, and fortified by a whole train of artillery, these mercenary soldiers took possession of the common, the state-house, the court-house, and Faneuil Hall. It was at this moment of terror and danger that Quincy openly and fearlessly addressed his townsmen in a memorable speech. The following is an extract from his oration, the whole of which was reported in the Boston Gazette of October 3.

“Oh, my countrymen! what will our children say when they read the history of these times, should they find we tamely gave away, without one noble struggle, the most invaluable of earthly blessings? As they drag the galling chain, will they not execrate us? If we have any respect for things sacred; any regard to the dearest treasure on earth;—if we have one tender sentiment for posterity;—if we would not be despised by the world;—let us, in the most open solemn manner, and with determined fortitude, swear,—we will die,—if we cannot live freemen!”

This is enough to suggest that, however

powerful this orator was with his pen, he was much more potent when seen and heard in the impressive act of living and spontaneous speech.

The spirit of eloquence is a social spirit, dwelling in the midst of men, making appeals to their sympathies, beguiling them of their fears, and aggrandizing their minds. It gathered its thousands around the bema and rostrum of old; it nerved nations like the tocsin of war, and made aggressions on the kingdoms of ignorance and tyranny with the clear clarion cry of perpetual triumph. It was heard at the banquet of artists, the festival of authors, and the coronation of heroes. Eloquence was twin-born with Liberty; together they have harmoniously lived through all vicissitudes, and together they have migrated from land to land. The spirit of eloquence is the sun, which from its rising, inspired the statue of Memnon; it is the flame which warmed into life the image of Prometheus. It is this which causes the graces and the loves to take up their habitations in the hardest marble, to subsist in the emptiness of light and shadow on the pictured canvass, or in winged words to bound from soul to soul through congregated masses with the potency and impressiveness of omnipotence.

The tears which an orator like Quincy compels his audience to shed, make friends and brothers of them all.

“One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.”

Faith and feeling become strengthened by diffusion. Each individual feels himself stronger among so many kindred associates, and the minds of all flow together in one grand and irresistible stream. The auditor loves to yield himself up to the fascination of a rich mellow voice, a commanding attitude, and a brilliant physiognomy. He outruns the illusion. He is thrilled in every nerve, he is agitated with rapture or remorse, with indignation or grief. He blends all his emotions with the speaker, and is subdued or inspired under his power. He soon becomes stripped of all defence, and willingly exposed to every blow, so that the greatest effects are produced by the slightest words adroitly directed and skillfully expressed.

Mr. Quincy died before our national triumph was won. But he saw its glories. He prophetically described them in language worthy of his august theme, and equalled only by the splendid reality when it came.

“Spirits and genii like those who arose in Rome,” said he, “will one day make glorious this more western world. America hath in

store her Bruti and Cassii,—her Hampdens and Sydneys;—patriots and heroes, who will form *a band of brothers*:—men, who will have memories and feelings, courage and swords;—courage, that shall inflame their ardent bosoms, till their hands cleave to their swords, and their swords to their enemies' hearts."

Let us proceed to consider more of these.

#### JOHN HANCOCK

Was born at Quincy, and was the son and grandson of eminent clergymen. He graduated at Harvard, in 1754. He was a magnificent liver, lavishly bountiful when once enlisted, and splendidly hospitable to the friends of any cause he loved. Through the influence of his poor but devoted friend, Samuel Adams, he early became interested in colonial enfranchisement, and ultimately rose to a most conspicuous place among patriots. He was *the dignified cavalier of American liberty*. In the proclamation issued by General Gage, after the battle of Lexington, and a few days before that of Bunker Hill, offering pardon to the *rebels*, he and Samuel Adams were especially excepted, their offences being "of too flagitious a nature to admit of any other consideration than that of condign punishment."

The talents of Hancock were useful, rather than brilliant. His personal dignity and great practical skill in business, rendered him a superior presiding officer in deliberative assemblies. His voice was sonorous, his apprehensions were quick, and his knowledge of parliamentary forms, combined with his well known devotion to the popular cause, rendered him the object of universal respect.

When Washington consulted the legislature of Massachusetts upon the propriety of bombarding Boston, Hancock advised its being done immediately, if it would benefit the cause, although the most of his immense property consisted in houses and other real estate in that town.

But Hancock was ready to sacrifice more than property, more than life even; if necessary, he was willing to sacrifice his popularity in aid of the cause of national freedom.—Though in this matter he was a man of deeds more than words, yet he shunned not in the most public and forcible manner to express the most ardent and patriotic sentiments.

In the very darkest hour of colonial despair, he came boldly forward in an exercise commemorative of those who fell in the unhappy collision with British soldiers in State street, and in this "Oration on the Massacre," as it

was called, poured forth the following terrible denunciations:

“Let this sad tale of death never be told without a tear; let not the heaving bosom cease to burn with a manly indignation at the relation of it, through the long tracts of future time; let every parent tell the shameful story to his listening children, till tears of pity glisten in their eyes, or boiling passion shakes their tender frames.

“Dark and designing knaves, murderers, parricides! how dare you tread upon the earth which has drunk the blood of slaughtered innocence, shed by your hands? How dare you breathe that air which wafted to the ear of heaven the groans of those who fell a sacrifice to your accursed ambition? But if the laboring earth does not expand her jaws—if the air you breathe is not commissioned to be the minister of death—yet, hear it, and tremble! The eye of heaven penetrates the secret chambers of the soul; and you, though screened from human observation, must be arraigned—must lift your hands, red with the blood of those whose death you have procured, at the tremendous bar of God.”

In an oration delivered in Boston, on the 5th of March, 1774, Mr. Hancock concluded with the following excellent remarks:

“I have the most animating confidence, that the present noble struggle for liberty will terminate gloriously for America. And let us play the man for our God, and for the cities of our God; while we are using the means in our power, let us humbly commit our righteous cause to the great Lord of the universe, who loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity. And having secured the approbation of our hearts, by a faithful and unwearied discharge of our duty to our country, let us joyfully leave our concerns in the hands of Him who raiseth up and pulleth down the empires and kingdoms of the world.”

## GEN. JOSEPH WARREN

May be taken as *a type of our martial eloquence*. His career was brief, auspicious in its dawn, diversified in its progress, but glorious in its termination and subsequent influence on the welfare of man. Born in Roxbury, Massachusetts, 1740, he graduated at Harvard, in 1759, soon after became distinguished among the first physicians of Boston, cast himself into the front ranks of the revolution, as major general of the American army, when but thirty-five years of age, and fell on Bunker Hill, the first victim of rank in the sublime struggle for national independence.

While yet a student in college, he bore the reputation of great talents, undaunted courage, and a generous but indomitable independence of spirit. His manly life did not belie the promise of his youth. His magnanimous spirit soon became tempered in the furnace of national suffering. His mental vision was therein clarified like a prophet's, and like one inspired he proclaimed the triumph for which he was ready to die.

To his friend, Josiah Quincy, jr., then in London, advocating the claims of his country, he wrote the following memorable note, dated,

"BOSTON, Nov. 21st, 1774.

"It is the united voice of America to preserve their freedom, or lose their lives in defence of it. Their resolutions are not the effects of inconsiderate rashness, but the sound result of sober inquiry and deliberation. I am convinced that the true spirit of liberty was never so universally diffused through all ranks and orders of people, in any country on the face of the earth, as it now is through all North America."

Warren was himself but a vivid reflection of the popular feeling and its strong expression. The instincts of a true soul are sure; all

the strength and all the divinity of knowledge lie enwrapped in some of the soul's profounder feelings.

Great national commotions, like the American Revolution, generally elicit martial orators, whose eloquence is like their profession, full of thrusts the most piercing, and of blows the most deadly. The son of Macedonia and pupil of Aristotle, captivated Greeks and Barbarians as much by his eloquence as by his martial victories. Cæsar commanded the Roman legions by the regal power of his speech. The great military eloquence of France was born amid the first shocks of tyranny and freedom. Napoleon, by a sudden blow of martial fire, embodied in words that spoke like exploding cannon, seized upon the old generals of the republic, upon the army and upon his nation,—the irresistible empire of victory and of genius.

But Warren aspired only for personal rights and national independence. For this he plead and fought with all the power he possessed, body and soul. He felt the value of the boon, and put every thing except honor, in jeopardy to attain it. To convince, one must be convinced; he must have something at stake, he must have character.

As the storm thickened and ordinary souls

quailed at its lowering aspect and rapid approach, Warren stood unblenched. When the awful crisis actually had come, he coolly buckled on his armor, and only as he snuffed the hot breath of battle, did he rise to the full height of his native grandeur. Then with bosom bared to the fiercest blows, and with heart throbbing high for his country's welfare, he rushed to the deadliest breach, diffusing animation among friends and consternation to foes. It is easy to conceive him careering amid the carnage on Bunker's heights, like Homer's hero on the plains of Troy:

“Fill'd with the god, enlarged his muscles grew,  
Through all his veins a sudden vigor flew,  
The blood in brisker tides began to roll,  
And Mars himself came rushing on his soul.  
Exhorting loud through all the field he strode,  
And look'd, and moved, Achilles, or a god.”

We gain a more distinct conception of the martial spirit of Warren, from the peculiar character of his eloquence yet extant. One extract will suffice.

On March 6th, 1775, he delivered an oration commemorative of “the Boston Massacre.” In that fearful scene an event occurred which it is necessary to mention in order to feel the force of Warren's skillful and terrific amplification. After Mr. Gray had been shot through

the body, and had fallen dead on the ground, a bayonet was pushed through his skull; part of the bone being broken, the brains fell out upon the pavement. The orator alludes to this act of needless barbarity in a manner worthy of Mark Anthony.

“The many injuries offered to the town, I pass over in silence. I cannot now mark out the path which led to that unequalled scene of horror, the sad remembrance of which takes the full possession of my soul. The sanguinary theatre again opens itself to view. The baleful images of terror crowd around me; and discontented ghosts, with hollow groans, appear to solemnize the anniversary of the fifth of March.

“Approach we then the melancholy walk of death. Hither let me call the gay companion; here let him drop a farewell tear upon that body which so late he saw vigorous and warm with social mirth; hither let me lead the tender mother to weep over her beloved son—come, widowed mourner, here satiate thy grief; behold thy murdered husband gasping on the ground, and to complete the pompous show of wretchedness, bring in each hand thy infant children to bewail their father’s fate;—take heed, ye orphan babes, lest, while streaming eyes are fixed upon the ghastly corpse, your

feet slide on the stones bespattered with your father's brains! Enough; this tragedy need not be heightened by an infant weltering in the blood of him that gave it birth. Nature reluctant, shrinks already from the view, and the chilled blood rolls slowly backward to its fountain. We wildly stare about, and with amazement ask, who spread this ruin round us? What wretch has dared deface the image of God? Has haughty France, or cruel Spain, sent forth her myrmidons? Has the grim savage rushed again from the far distant wilderness, or does some fiend, fierce from the depth of hell, with all the rancorous malice which the apostate damned can feel, twang her destructive bow, and hurl her deadly arrows at our breast? No, none of these—but, how astonishing! it is the hand of Britain that inflicts the wound!"

The master spirit next to pass in review, demands our profoundest homage.

JOHN ADAMS

Was born in Braintree, Mass., October 19, 1735. He received his Bachelor's degree at Cambridge, in 1755, and the degree of Master of Arts, in 1758. He early commenced the practice of law in his native town, now called Quincy, and afterwards removed to Boston;

and, by the consecration of a protracted life and consummate talents to the welfare of his country, won a reputation as wide as the world.

It is not our purpose to quote largely from the writings of Mr. Adams, but only to allude to certain sentiments, the better to present the distinctive character of his eloquence. In company with Thomas Cushing, Samuel Adams, and Robert Treat Paine, John Adams was chosen by the colony of Massachusetts, to represent them in the first Continental Congress, which met at Philadelphia, 1774. His friend, Sewall, who had taken the ministerial side in politics, and was at that time attorney general of the province, hearing of his election, endeavored earnestly to dissuade him from his purpose of assuming the seat to which he had been appointed. He told him of the resolution of Great Britain to pursue her system with the greatest rigor; that her power was irresistible, and would involve him in destruction, as well as all his associates. His response unfolds at once the dignity of his resolutions on contemplating this great and daring national movement.

“I know that Great Britain has determined on her system, and that very determination determines me on mine. You know that I

have been constant and uniform in opposition to her designs. Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish with my country, is my fixed, unalterable determination."

We ought to expect that eloquence the most exalted would spontaneously emanate from such a soul. The orator, grand by nature, like the eagle, hovers above the clouds in the pure region of principles; while the mere haranguer, the demagogue, ruled by time-serving expediency, like the swallow, skims earth and sea, garden and swamp, making a thousand erratic turns, catching a few groveling insects, and annoying the thoughtful traveler with its clattering wings. John Adams was the eagle of colonial and revolutionary eloquence in America, quick of eye and strong of wing, habitually calm in its grandeur, sometimes passionate and rapid in his course beyond all example.

He was an admirable model of *blended enthusiasm and sobriety*; this constituted his individuality as a popular orator, and his consummate excellence as a statesman.

The marriage of the powerful Jupiter with the lovely Latona produced the graceful symmetry of Apollo—the happy combination of beauty, precision, agility and strength—and these were the elements that composed the

mental character of our great countryman. He resembled two of England's greatest forensic gladiators. Fox was a logician, lord Chatham an orator. John Adams combined in his eloquence much of the severe reason of the one, and the power of fascination so exuberant in the other. Arguments set forth by Fox were adapted to convince the reflecting; a speech from Chatham would impel all hearers immediately to action. John Adams was happily endowed to accomplish both results at the same time; his reasons for acting were as luminous as his appeals were exciting. Like the courser described by the classic poet:

“ His high mettle, under good control,  
Gave him Olympic speed, and shot him to the goal.”

To think deeply and feel strongly, at one and the same time—to blend thought and emotion in luminous expression, and to concentrate both simultaneously on the audience in one blaze of argument and illustration—this is the means and guaranty of success, this is eloquence.

Herein consisted John Adams' great excellence. His head was cool, but his heart was ardent—a volcano beneath summits of snow—he projected his argument frigidly, in premeditated compactness, as if the fountain of emotion was entirely congealed in him; but when he arose in the eye of the nation, and began

to feel the importance of his theme, he became livid with the fires of patriotism, like the frenzied Pythoness, and seized possession of the general mind, with the authority of a master and a king. He clothed the bony substance of his dialectics with the flesh and blood of his ardent and spontaneous rhetoric; he kindled the Continental Congress into a flame, because he was himself inflamed. He precipitated himself upon his hearers without wandering in extravagance, and commanded their feelings with his pathos, without ceasing to rule their judgments by the justness of his thought. Sometimes, indeed, he seemed to stagger under the weight and pungency of conceptions which language could not express.

“Low’ring he stood, still in fierce act of speech,  
Yet speechless.”

His great talent lay in this: he intuitively saw to what point in the minds of his audience to apply his strength, and he sent it home there with the force of a giant.

Mr. Jefferson has himself affirmed, “that the great pillar of support to the declaration of independence, and its ablest advocate and champion on the floor of the house, was John Adams. He was the colossus of that congress; not always fluent in his public addresses, he yet came out with a power, both

of thought and expression, which moved his hearers from their seats."

Let us look back a moment and consider how the great orators of the Revolution were disciplined, and perfected for the sublime mission they performed. They were highly educated and classically refined; but their best weapons were forged in the presence of tyrants and desperate toils. Eloquence, to be affecting and grand, must have perils to brave, the unfortunate to defend, and daring honors to win. Great trials and fearful conflicts make great orators. The grammarians and the musicians, the men who cured stammering, and taught their pupil to pronounce the letter R distinctly, aided the great Athenian much undoubtedly, but they created no nerve of his eloquence. Neither did his shaved head, his cave, his mouthful of pebbles, and his declamation by the sounding sea, inspire the imperial orator who fulminated over the world like a tropical storm. The mighty tempest of military force and political domination lowering on the hills of Macedon, and crashing on the plains of Chœronea—the fiery furnace of mental conflict, where the aspiring spirit is its own best instructor—the dread arena of physical battle with adverse legions, and lofty mental strife with malignant foes leagued to

impel a falling state to ruin,—this was the school where Demosthenes was trained, and these were the means by which his eloquence was won.

And so of Cicero. Archias with his elegant learning, and Philo with his elaborate rhetoric,—the groves of Athens with all their philosophy, and the school of the Rhodian Milo, with all its gymnastic development,—formed not the master orator, potent alike in the fastidious Senate, or amid the tumultuous masses of that gorgeous pandemonium of imperial Rome,—the Forum. But to be the sport of rival chiefs and remorseless factions, hailed with a torrent of acclamations at one moment, and at the next drowned in the execrations of armed throngs,—to fight his way from the obscurity of an humble plebeian to the highest pinnacle of fame, and thence to be rudely dragged down, to banishment, poverty, and popular odium by the traitorous Cataline and the accursed Clodius,—this was the source that inspired the Philippics, this was the school of Cicero's eloquence.

The first indication of mental freedom at the beginning of the French revolution, and the most remarkable department of intellectual improvement, was eloquence. The sudden expansion of senatorial oratory, at that

period, was a sure prognostic of rising liberty. If a Barnave and his associates were virulent in their attacks, and excited the populace to frenzy by their stormy declamations, it was because the wrongs they suffered were exasperating, and nothing but a tornado could clear their path. Mirabeau was roused by seventeen *lettres de cachet*, directed against his own person; and under such motives to action he defended popular rights with an energy that crushed a throne.

John Adams, in his day and for his country, was second to no man that ever lived. Within his simple exterior the divinity was concealed, not only latent, but effective at will. If he did not appear before the world with the insignia of Hercules, the shaggy lion's skin and the knotted club, he bore a full quiver and the silver bow of the god of the sun, and every shaft he loosened from the string told with unerring aim at the heart of his monster-foe.

Contemplate him as he appeared in the great debate on the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, standing, in that crisis of indescribable grandeur, like Moses on the mount, encompassed with thunders and lightnings, bearing the tables of the law in his arms, his brow encircled with a halo of fire, and his eye gleaming with a prophetic view of a mighty nation soon to emerge from thral-

dom, and send generation after generation down through untold ages.

It was on the evening of that day on which the sublimest victory was won that history can ever record, that this champion, yet agitated by the storm and covered with the foam and dust of battle, retired in triumph from the field and wrote that glorious letter to his distant wife, beginning with the memorable words — “The die is cast. We have passed the Rubicon !”

How characteristic of their author are these brief, but significant expressions ! When the mind is free and thought is fearless, eloquence speaks in condensed and pointed terms, like arrows which are most sure when they are least encumbered and most swiftly winged. When the soul is heroic and its conceptions fervid, its coruscations bear the brilliant potency of lightning, irresistible to earthly obstructions, and terrible to guilt.

Cotemporaries say that John Adams was peculiarly luminous in his demonstrations,—as if jets of light shot out from his eyes, his mouth, and his finger ends. He was not large in body, but his well-formed and expressive figure reflected all the passions of his soul. He was eloquent all over. He was a mental gladiator, a man of forensic war, and never was he more beautiful than when surrounded by the hottest flames of the fight.

## SECOND ORATION.

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IF there be one attribute of man, supreme in dignity and worth, it is that of oratory. The illusions of the eye, combined with the enchanting power of music, constitute an influence less potent upon the imagination and will, than the spirit-stirring appeals of "eloquence divine." Other charms are mostly drawn from the external world, but this emanates from the unseen spirit within; its splendors gleam through animated clay, and proclaim the superior majesty of immortal mind.

When men are exhilarated in the presence of excellence, when they are greatly moved by the power of cultivated speech, the imagination is more susceptible of receiving agreeable impressions, and the mind becomes insensibly imbued with the worth it in rapture admires. When the heart and fancy are thus taken captive by those sentiments which are addressed to our sensibilities, the better to move our reason, the severe rules which we impose on the frigid logician, become generously expanded. The orator feels no longer

wounded by hyper-critical restraints ; more latitude is granted for the expansion of his genius, and in the moment of fortunate daring, he creates happy emotions in others, and fore-tokens fame for himself.

The era in our history, now under consideration, was exceedingly favorable for the cultivation of the most exalted order of eloquence. It was a period when the public mind was strongly agitated by the popular discussion of interests, the most comprehensive and enduring.

The war of 1776 was the Trojan war of America ; it diffused one impulse over our whole domain, united the colonies in one spirit of resistance against oppression, and bound them together in one national bond. Moreover, it had the effect of the Persian war, when Miltiades led the flower of Greece to Marathon, and a young but vigorous nation could successfully compete with superior numbers and veteran skill. The different sections of the country vied with each other in generous competition for precedence in facing a common foe, feeling that stern conflicts and a glorious triumph were necessary to give them all a consciousness of their real strength.

The period of our colonial and revolutionary history was in fact an era of great superiority

in eloquence, at home and abroad. England then presented an array of orators such as she has known at no other time. In Westminster Hall, the accomplished Mansfield was constantly heard in support of kingly power, while the philosophic and argumentative Camden exercised his mighty intellect in defence of popular rights. Burke had awoke with all his wealth of fancy, daring imagination and comprehensive learning. Fox had entered the arena of forensic and senatorial gladiatorship, with his great, glowing heart and titanic passions, all kindled into volcanic heat. Junius, by his sarcasm and audacity, stung the loftiest circles into desperation. Erskine embellished the darkened heavens by the rainbow tints of his genius; and Chatham, worthily succeeded by his "cloud-compelling" son, ruled the billowy sea of excited mind with the majesty of a god.

Against all that is powerful in mental energy and martial force, our fathers had to give battle under the most fearful odds. The chivalrous antagonists came into open field; empires were at stake, and the struggle was worthy of the prize, as the result was glorious to those whom we delight to commemorate.

Eloquence in America then was a system of the most invigorating mental gymnastics. The

popular orators hurled accusations and arguments into the bosom of the populace, and roused universal rebellion against regal wrongs. Prominent among the mightiest of "the rebels," stood

## PATRICK HENRY.

He was born in Hanover county, Virginia, May 29th, 1736. His violin, his flute, a few favorite books, habitual and critical study of human nature, frequent ramblings in the wild woods, and profound meditations by flowing streams, occupied the diversified years of his youth. The only science he loved was mathematics, and the book he most read, among uninspired authors, was a translation of "the pictured Livy." "Much, but not many," was a rule with him. The books he did peruse, he digested thoroughly; but he was not a thing made up of fragments,—he was himself, a man self-developed,—he thought more than he read.

After a six weeks preparation, he obtained a license to practice the law, being then twenty-four years of age, and almost entirely ignorant of the simplest forms of the profession he had embraced.

For some time he was entirely unnoticed, but in his famous speech in *the parson's cause*,

he at length began to engross public attention. As counsel for Mr. Dandridge, in a contested election, he made a brilliant harangue on the rights of suffrage. Such a burst of eloquence from so plain and humble a man, struck the popular mind with amazement, and at once made the speaker an object of universal respect.

In the common acceptation of the word, Mr. Henry was not educated ; like the great English author, he “knew little Latin and less Greek.” But in the best sense of the term, he was superlatively educated for the mission he fulfilled.

The ethereal splendors which burned through his words, were not elaborated, spark by spark, in the laboratory of pedantic cloisters. It was in the open fields, under the wide cope of heaven, full of free, healthful and livid atmosphere, this oratorical Franklin caught his lightnings from gathering storms as they passed over him ; and he communicated his charged soul with electrical swiftness and effect. *He was the incarnation of revolutionary zeal.* He had absorbed into his susceptible nature, the mighty inspiration which breathed throughout the newly awakened and arousing world. He tempered and retempered his soul in boiling premeditations against tyranny, as the

cutler tempers a sword by plunging it into water while yet red hot from the furnace.

The orator of strong powers will be more intent on striking with force than with elegance ; wholly absorbed in his great purpose, he will not stop to polish a phrase, when he should compel his antagonist to fall. He will make his dirk keen rather than glittering.

Education among the best Greeks was not effeminate. Themistocles says of himself, that he had learned neither to tune the harp nor handle the lyre, but that he knew how to make a small and inglorious city both powerful and illustrious. He could not sleep for the trophies of Miltiades. In his boyhood he shunned puerile sports, and spent his time in severe self-discipline. Having been a poor and disinherited child, he achieved the highest honors in Athens, and for a season controlled the civilized world.—Henry was a delegate in the first Congress assembled at Philadelphia ; he collected the first corps of volunteers in the south after the battles of Lexington and Concord, and was first Governor of his native Commonwealth, which, by repeated re-elections he continued to rule until 1779.

In his habits of living he was remarkably temperate and frugal. He seldom drank any thing but water, and furnished his table in the

most simple manner. His morals were strict; and, especially in his mature life, as a Christian he was very decided.

His personal appearance was exceedingly striking. He was nearly six feet high; spare and raw-boned, with a slight stoop of his shoulders. His complexion was dark and sallow; his natural expression grave, thoughtful and penetrating. He was gifted with a strong and musical voice; and, when animated, spoke with the greatest variety of manner and tone. He could be vehement, insinuating, humorous, and sarcastic by turns, and to every sort of style he gave the highest effect. He was an orator by nature, and of the highest class, combining all those traits of figure and intellect, action and utterance which have indissolubly linked his brilliant name with the history of his country's emancipation.

After his death, there was found among his papers one sealed, and endorsed as follows, in his own hand-writing: "The within resolutions passed the house of burgesses in May, 1765. They formed the first opposition to the Stamp Act, and the scheme of taxing America by the British Parliament. All the colonies, either through fear, or want of opportunity to form an opposition, or from influence of some kind or other, had remained silent. I had

been for the first time elected a burgess a few days before, was young, inexperienced, unacquainted with the forms of the house, and the members that composed it. Finding the men of weight opposed to the opposition, and the commencement of the tax at hand, and that no person was likely to step forth, I determined to venture, and alone, unadvised, and unassisted, on a blank leaf of an old law book, wrote the within. Upon offering them to the House, violent debates ensued. Many threats were uttered, and much abuse cast on me by the party for submission. After a long and warm contest, the resolutions passed by a very small majority, perhaps of one or two only. The alarm spread throughout America with astonishing quickness, and the ministerial party were overwhelmed. The great point of resistance to British taxation was universally established in the colonies. This brought on the war, which finally separated the two countries, and gave independence to ours. Whether this will prove a blessing or a curse, will depend upon the use our people make of the blessings which a gracious God hath bestowed on us. If they are wise, they will be great and happy. If they are of a contrary character, they will be miserable. Righteousness alone can exalt them as a na-

tion. Reader, whoever thou art, remember this; and in thy sphere, practise virtue thyself, and encourage it in others.

P. HENRY."

The speech made by James Otis against "Writs of Assistance," we have seen, made John Adams the orator. The eloquence of Patrick Henry, in the colonial Assembly at Williamsburg, May, 1765, created another college student, Thomas Jefferson, the patriot.

This magnificent child of nature had just appeared in public with his famous resolutions against the stamp act, referred to in his own record just quoted. The opposition to the last resolution in particular was extremely vehement; the debate upon it, to use Jefferson's strong language, was "most bloody," but torrents of indomitable eloquence from Henry, prevailed, and the resolutions were carried.

Henry was as remarkable for his power of self-control as for his habitual impetuosity. Like as a courser of high mettle and pure blood suddenly reined in, stands on his haunches with every nerve trembling, so he could arrest the impetuous course of his eloquence, and turn in a moment to reply to any pertinent or impertinent interruption. The

debate in question presents a striking instance.

"I well remember," says Mr. Jefferson, "the cry of 'treason,' by the speaker, echoed from every part of the House, against Mr. Henry. I well remember his pause, and the admirable address with which he recovered himself, and baffled the charge thus vociferated." The allusion here is to that memorable exclamation of Mr. Henry: "Cæsar had his Brutus, Charles the First his Cromwell, and George the Third, — "Treason !" cried the speaker, "treason ! treason !" echoed the House — "may profit by the example," promptly replied the orator, "if this be treason, make the most of it."

Jefferson was present during the whole of the occasion alluded to above. He was then but a youth, and stood in the door of communication between the House and the lobby, where he says he heard the whole of this violent debate. Like the boy, John Adams, he thenceforth consecrated himself to the service of his country.

Scipio Africanus, while yet in his early youth, stood one day on a hill near Carthage, and looked down on a terrific battle-field where those veteran generals, Massanissa and Hamilcar crashed through opposing legions in the tug of war. This chance view gave direc-

tion to his life. But Adams and Jefferson, in the presence of Otis and Henry, were inspired with loftier impulses and for nobler ends.

The Virginia orator never worried his prey by darting on him javelins from afar; he advanced directly up with raised sledge and smote his victim between his two horns with a blow that felled him at once. There are two kinds of eloquence. The highest order flows directly from the soul, as from a perennial and prolific fountain. Its current is incessant and irresistible; if arrested a moment, it accumulates its own chafing mass and will inevitably crush the obstacles by which it is opposed. The other multiplies its delicate threads around its object, betraying him into the meshes of a skilful net, by the fascination of a look, in the mean time strengthening every tiny bond until the victim is secured and tortured to death by a thousand malignant stings.

Henry's mind was not disciplined into symmetry by severe science, nor was it embellished with the decorations of classical learning; but massy fragments of original thought frequently appear in the progress of his speech, like shattered colonnades and broken statues, hurled from pedestal and base buried in common dust. He was richly endowed with that

permeating imagination which gives vitality to the body of thought, and which makes the fortune of every great master in the divine art of eloquence. He was imbued with that vehemence of conviction, that oratorical action, which modulates the tones and tinges the visage with irresistible power, and suggests to the rapt listener more than articulated language can express. His soul melted, and there were tears in his voice that no heart could withstand. His argument grew luminous as it rose, like a majestic tree on fire, and its combustion shone with a splendor inextinguishable and unexcelled.

The insipid prettiness of rhetorical mechanism no more resembles the soul of true eloquence, than the unconscious quiverings of galvanized muscles resemble the spontaneous throbs of a living and impassioned heart. Samson chose an uncouth weapon, but three hundred Philistines felt its force.

It is necessary to bring into bold relief the natural grandeur of things by simplicity of expression. The orator must be familiar without vulgarity, original without eccentricity, natural, and yet highly artistic,—in apparent carelessness “snatching a grace beyond the reach of art,”—fluent in language, but elaborate in thought, speaking at once to the in-

instincts that are most profound, as well as those that are most superficial. Ordinarily, Henry's style was the natural current of his thought and glided along in limpid, glowing abundance, as if it reflected the still beams of the sun. But when some exciting crisis occurred, his speech became impetuous and rugged with sythes and daggers, like a Saxon war-chariot; then his livid bolts shot off in every direction with the concussion of lightnings which in the same instant shine and kill. He drew the great masses of mankind closely around him by the exaltation of his sentiments; he held them still more enthralled by the simplicity of his language.

The April shower is grateful to the soft herbage, and the still snow falls gracefully to earth, but neither of these produce strong impressions on the beholder. On the contrary, when ragged clouds, fringed with electric fires and buffeted by terrific winds, pour down piercing hail and torrent rain, intermingled with thunders that shake the skies and astound the earth, then do men tremble unbidden in the presence of natural sublimity.

Tradition and history speak in rapturous terms of Patrick Henry's eloquence, and some of his speeches reported by cotemporaries substantiate his fame. But as well might one at-

tempt to paint lightning with charcoal, as to delineate a soul like his, in dull words. In order properly to appreciate his power, we

—— “Should have seen him in the Campus Marcius,—  
In the tribunal,—shaking all the tribes  
With mighty speech. His words seemed oracles,  
That pierced their bosoms ; and each man would turn,  
And gaze in wonder on his neighbor’s face,  
That with the like dumb wonder answer’d him :  
Then some would weep, some shout, some, deeper touch’d,  
Keep down the cry with motion of their hands,  
In fear but to have lost a syllable.”

We should have seen him when he knew that he spoke under the shadow of the scaffold,—when British cannon were booming at the north, and, standing in the outlawed assembly of Virginia, like a lion at bay, he caught the first cry of distress from Lexington and Bunker Hill,—with a generous devotion that made no reserve and knew no fear,—with a voice solemn, tremulous with patriotic rage, and swelling over the thrilled audience like a trumpet-call to arms, and with an eye flashing unutterable fire, he exclaimed—  
“Give me liberty, or give me death !”

RICHARD HENRY LEE

Was a dignified statesman, whose profound erudition and captivating rhetoric were rendered very efficient in moulding the early in-

stitutions of our land. He was born Jan. 20, 1732, in Westmoreland county, Virginia, and received the most of his classical education in Yorkshire, England. He returned to his native land when about twenty years of age, and, as he possessed a large fortune, his time was mainly devoted to the improvement of his mind.

Mr. Lee was a polished gentleman. His mental accomplishments were richly diversified, and his manners were of courtly elegance. He had more talent than genius. In the pompous regularity of insipid elegance and punctilious mediocrity, orators elaborated in the schools are more distinguished for the fewness of their faults, than the multitude and originality of their beauties. No enthusiasm, no blaze of imagination, no crashing arguments irradiate their speeches with flashing splendors.

Lee's eloquence was like a beautiful river, meandering through variegated and elegant scenes, but which never inundates its banks nor bursts its barriers. He was not, like Patrick Henry, a mountain torrent, springing from exalted sources, and dashing away every thing in its irresistible career.

But Lee was a fine rhetorician and a sagacious debater. He had the happy faculty of

throwing oil on the agitated sea. When the continental Congress met in Philadelphia on the 5th of September, 1774, it is said that silence, awful and protracted, preceded "the breaking of the last seal," and that astonishment and applause filled the house when this was done by Patrick Henry. The excitement consequent on that yonderful effort might have subsided into lassitude and despondency, had not Mr. Lee perceived "the quiver on every lip, the gleam in every eye." With the quickness of intuition he saw the crisis and happily attempted to turn the mass of agitated feeling to great practical good. He arose, and the sweetness of his language, and harmony of his tones, soothed, but did not suppress the tide of tumultuous emotion swelling in every breast. With the most persuasive eloquence, he demonstrated that there was but one hope for the country, and that lay in the energy of immediate and united resistance.

Mr. Lee was undoubtedly a copious and eloquent speaker. Some of his admirers called him "the American Cicero," but, unfortunately, none of his popular speeches extant, justify this comparison.

He was the author of many important state papers. The great motion of June 7, 1776, "that these united colonies are, and of right

ought to be, free and independent states ; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown ; and that all political connexion between them and the state of Great Britain, is, and ought to be totally dissolved," was drawn, introduced, and ably supported by Mr. Lee.

As chairman of the committee appointed for that purpose, it was also his privilege to furnish the commission and instructions which invested George Washington with the command of the American army.

The Address which, by the direction of Congress, Mr. Lee drew up in 1775, on behalf of the twelve United Colonies, to the inhabitants of Great Britain, is a masterly production, and will continue to the end of time an imperishable monument to his patriotism and eloquence.

Having enumerated the wrongs endured by the colonies, and defended the measures of resistance by them employed, the Address closes with the following solemn adjuration :

"If you have no regard to the connection that has for ages subsisted between us ; if you have forgot the wounds we have received fighting by your side for the extension of the empire ; if our commerce is not an object below your consideration ; if justice and humanity have lost their influence on your hearts ;

still, motives are not wanting to excite your indignation at the measures now pursued: your wealth, your honor, your liberty are at stake.

“Notwithstanding the distress to which we are reduced, we sometimes forget our own afflictions, to anticipate and sympathise in yours. We grieve that rash and inconsiderate councils should precipitate the destruction of an empire, which has been the envy and admiration of ages; and call God to witness! that we would part with our property, endanger our lives, and sacrifice every thing but liberty, to redeem you from ruin.

“A cloud hangs over your heads and ours; ere this reaches you, it may probably burst upon us; let us entreat heaven to avert our ruin, and the destruction that threatens our friends, brethren and countrymen, on the other side of the Atlantic!”

Before proceeding to the analytical consideration of the next secular orator, we will glance a moment at the patriotic character of the divines of different persuasions during the colonial and revolutionary period of our history.

The grand struggle then going on in view of the whole world, had a stimulating effect on all heroical spirits, though not directly en-

gaged in the strife;—the same effect which Homer tells us the fight of the Greeks and Trojans before the fleet, had on Achilles; who, though he had resolved not to mingle in the shock of arms, yet found a martial warmth to steal upon him at the sight of blows, the sound of trumpets, and the cries of fighting men.

A distinguished civilian, after listening to a most striking prayer from the late Dr. Buckminster, of Portsmouth, N. H., on an occasion of great national interest, remarked, on leaving the house, that the Dr. deserved no credit for that prayer, for it was the effect of immediate inspiration. Such an *afflatus* seems not to have been uncommon with early preachers in America.

PRESIDENT STILES,

Of Yale College, with his puny body and large soul, preached a discourse on the occasion of the death of George II. and the accession of George III. in which he admonished the latter against suffering any retrenchment of the liberties of New England. In his history of the three Judges of Charles I. published long before our Revolution, he announced that the 30th of January, which was observed by many Christians, in commemoration of the martyr-

dom of that king "ought to be celebrated as an anniversary thanksgiving, that one nation on earth had so much fortitude and public justice, as to make *a royal tyrant bow to the sovereignty of the people.*"

## SAMUEL DAVIES,

Born in Delaware, was the ablest Dissenter in the southern provinces. On receiving the news of Braddock's Defeat, near *Fort Du Quesne*, he preached a sermon, in which the following remarkable prophecy occurs, with relation to the youthful subaltern by whose valor and skill the remnant of Braddock's army was saved: "I may point out to the public," said this eloquent and patriotic divine, "that heroic youth, Colonel George Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner, *for some important service to his country.*"

At the opening of the first Congress in Philadelphia, on motion of Samuel Adams, Mr. *Duche* was invited to perform appropriate religious service. He appeared and recited several prayers, in the established form, and then read the *collect* for the seventh day of September, which was the thirty-fifth Psalm. "You must remember," says John Adams, in a letter to his wife, from which I am quoting, "this

was the next morning after we heard the horrible rumor of the cannonade of Boston. I never saw a greater effect upon an audience. It seemed as if Heaven had ordained that Psalm to be read on that morning.

“After this, Mr. Duche, unexpectedly to every body, struck out into an extemporary prayer, which filled the bosom of every man present. I must confess I never heard a better prayer, or one so well pronounced. Episcopalian as he is, Dr. Cooper himself never prayed with such fervor, such ardor, such earnestness and pathos, and in language so elegant and sublime, for America, for Congress, for the province of Massachusetts Bay, and especially the town of Boston. It had an excellent effect on everybody here. I must beg you to read that Psalm. If there was any faith in the *sortes Virgilianæ*, or *sortes Homericae*, or especially the *sortes Biblicæ*, it would be thought providential.”

These letters of John Adams to his wife, abound with intimations of the patriotism of the pulpit in those days. In one dated “7 July, 1775,” he enquires:

“Does Mr. Wibird preach against oppression and the other cardinal vices of the times? Tell him, the clergy here, of every denomination, thunder and lighten every Sabbath. They

pray for Boston and the Massachusetts. They thank God explicitly and fervently for our remarkable successes. They pray for the American army. They seem to feel as if they were among you."

Again he writes—

"PHILADELPHIA, 4 AUG. 1776.

"Went this morning to the Baptist meeting, in hopes of hearing Mr. Stillman, but was disappointed. He was there, but another gentleman preached."

This refers to the distinguished Dr. Stillman, who, among courteous gentlemen, refined scholars, and eloquent divines, perhaps stood second to none of any section or name. When the British took possession of Boston, and desecrated its sacred edifices, some of the more skillful of their officers who had recoiled under Stillman's patriotic preaching, illustrated their spite by drawing a charcoal outline of the great divine on the plastered wall of his own pulpit, in all the freedom of expressive gesture and eloquent denunciation. Doctor Stillman was pastor of the First Baptist Church in the metropolis of New England, a church which, amid all surrounding vicissi-

tudes, has never ceased to maintain intelligence, patriotism, and sound piety in both pulpit and pew.

#### ARCHBISHOP CARROLL

Was a devoted patriot and eloquent preacher. He was appointed Vicar General in 1786, and in 1789 was made Catholic Bishop of the United States. On the 22d of Feb. 1800, by a solemn and admirable discourse, he commemorated the character and services of General Washington, who had died but a few months before. It has been said by those who heard it, that when he recited the terrors, the encouragements, the distresses, and the glories of the struggle for Independence, he appeared to be laboring under intense emotions correspondent to those topics—to be swayed like the aged minstrel of the poet, with contagious influences, by the varied strain which he uttered. Happy for our country will it be, if all our divines shall remain as loyal as these.

#### ALEXANDER HAMILTON

Possessed many valuable traits of character, happily combined and rendered very useful to his adopted country and the world.

He was born, 1757, in Nevis, the most beautiful of the West India Islands. His father,

who was an Englishman, died at an early age. His mother, a native of Nevis, soon after she became a widow emigrated to New York, where her son, then sixteen years old, became a member of Columbia College. Not a year had passed before he gave splendid indications of his extraordinary abilities.

When the country was compelled to plunge into war, young Hamilton abandoned academic retirement, and entered the army as captain of artillery. He soon attracted the admiration of the Commander-in-chief, who appointed him his Aid-de-camp, with the rank of Colonel. This occurred in 1777, when Hamilton was but twenty years old. From this time, he continued the inseparable companion of Washington, during the war, and was always consulted by him and by all the chief public functionaries, on the most important occasions. He acted as his first aid-de-camp at the battles of Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth; and at his own request, at the siege of Yorktown, he led the detachment that carried by assault one of the enemy's strongest outworks.

After the war, Colonel Hamilton commenced the study of the law. He was soon admitted to the bar, and rose rapidly in professional and political life.

It will be well to trace rapidly the growth of this master-mind. While yet a youthful collegian, by his extraordinary writings and patriotic influence, he won the appellation of the "Vindicator of Congress." The letter that announced the battle of Lexington to the New Yorkers, concluded with these words: "the crimson fountain has opened, and God only knows when it will be closed." Young Hamilton immediately organized a military corps, mostly of fellow students. They practised their daily drill in the church-yard of St. George's Chapel, early in the morning, before the commencement of their college duties. They assumed the name of "Hearts of Oak," and wore a green uniform surmounted by a leathern cap on which was inscribed "Freedom or Death."

Hamilton's first political speech to a popular assembly, was delivered at "the great meeting in the fields," as it was called, held in New York, July 6th, 1774, and which was occasioned by the destruction of tea in Boston harbor. At that time he was a student in what was then called King's College, now known by the name of Columbia. His effort was unpremeditated, and at first he hesitated and faltered, being overawed by the impressive scene before him; but his youthful coun-

tenance, his slender form, and novel appearance awakened curiosity and excited universal attention. After a discussion, clear, forcible, and striking, of the great principles involved, he depicted, in glowing colors, the long continued and constantly aggravated oppressions of the mother country. "The sacred rights of mankind," exclaimed he, "are not to be rummaged for among old parchments, or musty records; they are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power." He insisted on the duty of resistance, pointed out the means and certainty of success, and described the waves of rebellion sparkling with fire, and washing back on the shores of England the wrecks of her power, her wealth, and her glory. Under this spontaneous burst of mature eloquence from youthful lips, the immense multitude first sank in awe and astonishment, and then rose with irrepressible enthusiasm.

"Down sunk

Instant all tumult, broke abruptly off  
Fierce voice and clash of arms; so mute and deep  
Settled the silence, the low sound was heard  
Of distant waterfall, and the acorn drop  
From the green arch above."

The death-like silence ceased as he closed, and repeated huzzas resounded to the heavens.

Hamilton seems to have been ever the object of passionate admiration to those who knew him well. A senior officer in Washington's staff conferred on him the epithet of "The little Lion," a term of endearment by which he was familiarly known among his bosom friends to the close of his life.

Hamilton, like Burke, was the great master of the human heart. Deeply versed in its feelings and motives, he "struck by a word, and it quivered beneath the blow; flashed the lightning glance of burning, thrilling, animated eloquence"—and its hopes and its fears were moulded to his wish. He was the vivid impersonation of political sagacity. His imagination and practical judgment, like two fleet coursers, ran neck and neck to the very goal of triumph. Military eloquence of the highest grade had its birth with liberty in the American revolution. But the majority of our heroes were not adepts in literature. They could conquer tyrants more skilfully than they could harangue them. To this rule, however, Hamilton was a distinguished exception. He was the most sagacious and laborious of our revolutionary orators. He anticipated time, and interrogated history with equal ease and ardor. He explored the archives of his own land, and drew from foreign courts the quin-

tessence of their ministerial wisdom. He illuminated the councils where Washington presided, and with him guarded our youthful nation with the eyes of a lynx and the talons of a vulture.

But we should give especial attention to Hamilton as a writer. Through the pen he wrought more extensively on the popular mind, perhaps, than by all the impressiveness of his living eloquence. He well understood the utility of this mighty engine for weal or woe. The ancient orators and writers, slowly transcribing their words on parchment, breathed in their little pipes a melody for narrow circles; but fame gives modern thought the magnificent trumpet of the press, whose perpetual voice speaks simultaneously to delighted millions at remote points.

It is of vast advantage to a nation, that men of the most elevated positions in civil affairs should take a part in its literature, and thus, with their pen, as well as by their patronage, foster its development and perfection. *Æschylus*, the oldest of the great tragedians of Greece, was himself a soldier, and fought with heroism in many of the glorious battles of his country—one of which furnished the theme of his most celebrated work. *Herodotus* was born only a few years before the great con-

flict with Xerxes; and Zenophon participated prominently in the remarkable military achievements he has commemorated. The best writers and most efficient statesmen in every land are developed and polished by the rough conflicts of practical life. Such was Alexander Hamilton. He was the indefatigable soldier of the press, the pen, and the army; in each field he carried a sword which, like the one borne by the angel at the gate of Paradise, flashed its guardian care on every hand. In martial affairs he was an adept, in literary excellence he was unexcelled, and in political discernment he was universally acknowledged to be superior among the great. We read his writings with ever increasing zest, fascinated by the seductive charms of his style, and impelled by the opening splendors of his far-reaching and comprehensive thoughts. They accumulate with a beautiful symmetry, and emanate legitimately from his theme. They expand and grow, as an acorn rises into an oak, of which all the branches shoot out of the same trunk, nourished in every part by the same sap, and form a perfect unit, amid all the diversified tints of the foliage and the infinite complexity of the boughs.

“The pen of our country,” says Troup, “was held by Hamilton; and for dignity of

manner, pith of matter, and elegance of style, General Washington's letters are unrivalled in military annals." The public documents drawn up by this Secretary, as well as those by his predecessors, richly deserve the encomium pronounced on them by Lord Chatham, in the House of Lords. "When you consider their decency, firmness, and wisdom," said he, "you cannot but respect their cause, and wish to make it your own. For myself, I must declare and avow, that in all my reading, and it has been my favorite pursuit, that for solidity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion, under all the circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the general congress at Philadelphia."

But after all that may be justly said in praise of Hamilton as a popular orator, heroic soldier, and polished writer, the most substantial service conferred on the country in the exercise of his diversified and transcendent talents, was performed by him under the most trying circumstances as the national financier. As Secretary of the Treasury, he was the creative spirit that ruled the tempest, and reduced chaos to form.

"Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar  
Stood ruled."

His integrity was never suspected, his moral

worth was of an exalted character, and his varied services in behalf of his country and the human race, can never be rated too high. "That writer would deserve the fame of a public benefactor," said Fisher Ames, "who could exhibit the character of Hamilton, with the truth and force that all who intimately knew him conceived it; his example would then take the same ascendant, as his talents. The portrait alone, however exquisitely finished, could not inspire genius where it is not; but, if the world should again have possession of so rare a gift, it might awaken it where it sleeps, as by a spark from heaven's own altar; for, surely, if there is any thing like divinity in man, it is in his admiration for virtue.

"The country deeply laments when it turns its eyes back, and sees what Hamilton was; but my soul stiffens with despair," continues Ames, "when I think what Hamilton *would have been*. It is not as Apollo, enchanting the shepherds with his lyre, that we deplore him; it is as Hercules, treacherously slain in the midst of his unfinished labors, leaving the world overrun with monsters."

But from the sagacious patriot so eloquently deplored, let us turn to a brief contemplation of his admiring friend.

## FISHER AMES

Was born at Dedham, Massachusetts, April 9, 1758. At the early age of twelve, he was admitted to Harvard College, and in due course received its academic honors, with the reputation of uncommon talents and attainments. His perpetual devotion to classical literature, contributed signally to the embellishment of his well disciplined mind. He was very early distinguished both as a writer and popular orator. The fame which followed his youthful efforts with the pen, won him a place in the Massachusetts Convention of 1788, assembled to ratify the constitution. In the character of "Lucius Junius Brutus," he wrote a series of powerful essays to animate the government of his country to decision and energy; and as the revolutionary storm subsided, as "Camillus," he taught the nation to profit by the dangers it had passed.

He was appointed to the first Congress of the United States, and remained there during the whole of Washington's administration, which he zealously defended. His speech on the appropriation for the British treaty so wrought upon the house, by the force and pathos of its eloquence, that a member in oppo-

sition moved to postpone the decision on the question, that they might not vote under the influence of a sensibility, which their calm judgment might condemn.

The training preparatory to public life which Fisher Ames experienced, was thorough and comprehensive. In moral worth he was excelled by no statesman of his day. His youth was studious, and his whole life was consecrated to the highest cultivation. He has himself said, "The heart is more than half corrupted, that does not burn with indignation at the slightest attempt to seduce it."

He excelled all his cotemporaries in the fascinations of conversation, even more than he was superior to most persons in public debate. He quailed before none amid the severe splendors of the rostrum, but he turned with hearty delight and unequalled attractiveness to the more genial charms of social life, of which he was very fond. "The value of friends," he observes, "is the most apparent and highest rated to those who mingle in the conflicts of political life. The sharp contests for little points wound the mind, and the ceaseless jargon of hypocrisy overpowers the faculties. I turn from scenes which provoke and disgust me, to the contemplation of the interest I have in private life, and to the pleasures of

society with those friends whom I have so much reason to esteem."

He who pulls but one string, will ring but one bell; he who has not his whole nature cultivated, will be narrowly restricted in his influence on mankind. We reach the passions only through the passions; we impel in others only that which is identical with what we first move in ourselves. The great orator must be "many-sided" and variously educated. He must grow up like the mountain oak, which, from unfolding germ to matured development, feeds on every kingdom of nature as it grows—taking in strength of heart, vigor of limb, and that ruggedness to endure which is perpetually appropriated from rocky earth and genial dews, from summer zephyrs, and wintry storms.

Fisher Ames was the orator of genius among our revolutionary patriots. He was impelled in his oratorical career by those mighty wings vouchsafed to few, but which reappearing from time to time in aid of the choicest minds, are necessary to bear Truth through the sea of time. He united the substantial and the ornamental,—the multiflora rose-bush in full bloom wreathed round a column of granite,—the decorations welling up from the fount of fine emotion, and lending vividness and mo-

mentum to the penetration and judgment which always constitute the basis of a great character. He was fond of patient investigation, when required ; but was more skillful in that prophetic sagacity of mind which lays hold of remote consequences with the force and accuracy of intuition. He seems to have meditated without effort, and to have produced without exhaustion.

The sublime in speech is nothing else than that which true genius discovers beyond the hacknied regions of ordinary ideas. The impressive orator must plunge in the deep mines of thought, and not be content to gather the brilliant grains of sand which cover the profounder veins of massy gold. He must leap beyond vulgar conceptions, and create his thought in those pure regions which extend between the extremes of trite prettiness and vapid exaggeration. The popular speaker must develope in their splendid magnitude the harmonious and imposing forms of expression which give to eloquence its force, its dignity, its vehemence, its gradation of thought and majestic movement. "The fulminating arrows of Demosthenes," says Cicero, "would strike with much less power, if they were emitted with less rythm and impetuosity."

Acute sensibility, the inseparable concomi-

tant of genius, and potent auxiliary of reason, was finely developed and copiously abounded in Fisher Ames. A mind kindled with enthusiasm unfolds its grandeur in the light of its own flames, as the sea is never more grand than at night when it heaves, storm-tossed and brilliant, with the illumination of its own phosphorescence. When fully aroused in debate, Ames frequently trembled from head to foot; he wept in irrepressible emotion, and paused in the struggle to embody the inarticulate eloquence of his heart. He bent under the reflex passions he aroused in others, and then in turn bowed them under the augmented weight of his own. It was said of this eloquent statesman, by president Kirkland, "After debate, his mind was agitated, like the ocean after a storm, and his nerves were like the shrouds of a ship, torn by the tempest."

The great orators of antiquity labored long and passionately to develop their own sensibilities, and, in speaking, to make their heart a mighty auxiliary to their intellect. They strove to feed the fires of their eloquence with the choicest materials selected from the most glowing sources; not as dry quotations, frigid ornaments tagged to the limping dulness of their own stupid thoughts, but as spontaneous contributions of volcanic heat and power,

kindling where they fell and blending with the flames they augmented. Their minds were rich with the selectest stores of elegant literature, and as some pertinent maxim or splendid illustration occurred in extemporaneous discourse, the gem grew suddenly brilliant amid the corruscations of inflamed fancy, while the orator poured his whole soul into his quotation, and sent it revived and blazing to every enraptured bosom. This power of reproducing familiar thoughts with all their original inspiration and effect, is a rare gift, and was constantly improved by Fisher Ames. He possessed the power of striking those delicate notes of soul-harmony which a sympathetic audience always repeat with rapture in their own hushed hearts. He diffused a charm around him, like ambrosia evaporating from an open vase, and which was worthy to be served at the table of the gods. He was not simply a rhetorician, or an adept in metaphysics, he was an orator by the true passion of eloquence; he was a musician in his tones, a painter in his looks, and a poet in his expressions.

Ames was a sound reasoner, but his style of argument was harmonious with the constitution of his mind. The logic that is most felt

is least seen, as the cannon ball that rends the target is not visible in its flight. True force should be measured by its efficiency, rather than by the manner in which its results are executed.

Popular eloquence must be rich in colors, simple in subject, sparkling with light, palpable in premises, bold in deduction, and varied in tone, in order to please the multitude and convince all. As in nature there are some prominent objects which can be seen from far, as a house, a tree, or a mountain, so there are but a few reasons so obvious as to strike the common mind. That which a philosopher comprehends by an argument, the mass of the people comprehend in an image. It is indispensable to use variety. The ear is soon pained with sameness of tone, and the soul loaths a perpetual string of syllogisms.

Ames in this respect was a master. He was easily excited, but exercised a sovereign power of self-control. He knew that it was necessary to be master of his own passions, in order to govern those of others. He assumed diversified forms and hues with Protean facility. Now he skims the ground and obscures himself in smoke; anon he darts through the empyrean with coruscations of flame, and with

resplendent light illuminates the waters, the earth and the heavens.

“The rapid argument  
Soar'd in gorgeous flight, linking earth  
With heaven by golden chains of eloquence;  
Till the mind, all its faculties and powers,  
Lay floating, self-surrendered in the deep  
Of admiration.”

His imagination was imperial. The whole universe of nature and art were at its control and subordinated to its use. The beautiful and the sublime, those two great pulses of eloquence, he felt deeply and could embody in multifarious forms. There were many stops of great power in the organ of his soul, and he could touch them all in a manner to suit his purpose and the time,—now piping in tender pathos, like night winds sighing among reeds over a fountain in a lonely dell, and, on more fearful occasions, crashing on the startled ear like bursting tempests, or distress guns booming amid the awful magnificence of elemental storms.

His power of giving a rapid sketch of a comprehensive and diversified field, is exemplified in the following paragraph. He is speaking of the ambition of a nation whose infidelity he dreaded. “Behold France, conducting her intrigues and arraying her force between the arctic circle and the tropics; see her, in Rus-

sia, the friend of despotism; in Ireland, the auxiliary of a bloody democracy; in Spain and Italy, a papist; in Egypt, a mussulman; in India, a bramin; and at home, an atheist; countenancing despotism, monarchy, democracy, religion of every sort, and none at all, as suits the necessity of the moment."

As an example of his illustrious imagination, take the following. He is speaking of England as a model of national industry to be imitated, rather than the nations on the continent. Among the latter he proceeds to say: "Commerce has not a single ship; arts and manufactures exist in ruins and memory only; credit is a spectre that haunts its burying-place; justice has fallen on its own sword; and liberty, after being sold to Ishmaelites, is stripped of its bloody garments to disguise its robbers."

Mr. Ames habitually dealt in a copious use of figures of speech. In his eulogy on Washington, he discourses as follows:

"Great generals have arisen in all ages of the world, and perhaps most in those of despotism and darkness. In times of violence and convulsion, they rise, by the force of the whirlwind, high enough to ride in it, and direct the storm. Like meteors, they glare on the black clouds with a splendor, which, while

it dazzles and terrifies, makes nothing visible but the darkness. The fame of heroes is indeed growing vulgar; they multiply in every long war; they stand in history, and thicken in their ranks, almost as undistinguished as their own soldiers.

“But such a chief magistrate as Washington appears like the pole-star in a clear sky, to direct the skillful statesman. His presidency will form an epoch, and be distinguished as the age of Washington. Already it assumes its high place in the political region. Like the milky way, it whitens along its allotted portion of the hemisphere. The latest generations of men will survey, through the telescope of history, the space where so many virtues blend their rays, and delight to separate them into groups and distinct virtues. As the best illustration of them, the living monument, to which the first of patriots would have chosen to consign his fame, it is my earnest prayer to heaven, that our country may subsist, even to that late day, in the plenitude of its liberty and happiness, and mingle its mild glory with Washington’s.”

But after all, the chief excellence in Mr. Ames, and one that renders him a worthy model to be emulated by all public speakers, was his great industry and care in improving

to perfection the chaste beauty of his style. As a specimen of his elaborate composition, and at the same time the very best description of himself, we will conclude with the following extract from his encomium on Alexander Hamilton.

“It is rare, that a man, who owes so much to nature, descends to seek more from industry; but he seemed to depend on industry, as if nature had done nothing for him. His habits of investigation were very remarkable; his mind seemed to cling to his subject, till it had exhausted it. Hence the uncommon superiority of his reasoning powers, a superiority that seemed to be augmented from every source, and to be fortified by every auxiliary, learning, taste, wit, imagination, and eloquence. These were embellished and enforced by his temper and manners, by his fame and his virtues. It is difficult, in the midst of such various excellence, to say, in what particular the effect of his greatness was most manifest. No man more promptly discerned truth; no man more clearly displayed it: it was not merely made visible—it seemed to come bright with illumination from his lips. But prompt and clear as he was, fervid as Demosthenes, like Cicero, full of resource, he was not less remarkable for the copiousness

and completeness of his argument, and left little for cavil, and nothing for doubt. Some men take their strongest argument as a weapon, and use no other; but he left nothing to be inquired for more—nothing to be answered. He not only disarmed his adversaries of their pretexts and objections, but he stripped them of all excuse for having urged them; he confounded and subdued, as well as convinced. He indemnified them, however, by making his discussion a complete map of his subject; so that his opponents might, indeed, feel ashamed of their mistakes, but they could not repeat them. In fact, it was no common effort that preserved a really able antagonist from becoming his convert; for the truth, which his researches so distinctly presented to the understanding of others, was rendered almost irresistibly commanding and impressive by the love and reverence, which, it was ever apparent, he profoundly cherished for it in his own. While patriotism glowed in his heart, wisdom blended in his speech her authority with her charms.”



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